

March 24, 1981



POLICY ISSUE
(Information)

For: The Commissioners

From: William J. Dircks
Executive Director for Operations

Subject: OPERATION OF NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS IN AREAS OF
HIGH POPULATION DENSITY

Purpose: To clarify which future actions the staff proposes
to take in response to the Commission Order dated
January 8, 1981.

Discussion: In an Indian Point Order dated January 8, 1981, the
Commission dealt with the issue of interim operation of
the Indian Point units during an adjudicatory hearing.
A footnote on page 2 of this order directed the NRC
staff to prepare (as a matter of high priority) a paper
setting options for addressing the question of reactor
operation in areas of high population density. On
January 12, 1981 the staff transmitted to the Commission
SECY 81-25 entitled "Performance of Probabilistic Risk
Assessment or Other Types of Special Analyses at High
Population Density Sites." This paper presented the
staff proposal for probabilistic and other types of
analyses to be performed on high population density
sites. The staff believes that the current and future
staff actions outlined in SECY 81-25 are responsive to
the footnote which requested a paper addressing high
population density sites.

A summary of the specific staff actions follows. For
those three facility sites that were identified as being
in the "substantially above average risk category" (Indian
Point, Limerick, and Zion), risk studies using WASH-1400
methodology are being performed by the licensees as are

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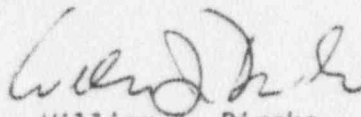
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studies of special mitigation features for Indian Point and Zion; special mitigation features will be studied for Limerick in the future, subsequent to completion of the Z/IP studies.

For the eight facility sites that were identified as being in the "above average risk category," the staff will alert the licensees to special design considerations and perform both a risk study and a long-range study of special mitigation features. Of these, only Millstone Unit 3 and Bally are in the early stages of construction. For Millstone Unit 3, the NREP reviews likely would be performed prior to the issuance of the OL. The special problems associated with the Bally site will be addressed within the context of outstanding petitions filed under 10 CFR 2.206; staff action on this is held pending further direction from the Commission.

All other sites will be assessed by similar activities. However, the details of the risk study and special mitigation feature programs are not developed, and the priority given to such reviews will be based on a number of factors other than population density (e.g., licensing status and age of the plant).

These specific actions are presently underway or contemplated at high population density sites. Therefore, pending further Commission guidance on SECY 81-25, the actions identified by the staff are considered the response to the footnote in the Commission Order.



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